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18 November 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, COMIREX

SUBJECT : Proposed TAGBOARD Mission for South China in November

1. The ICRS has reviewed the proposed TAGBOARD mission scheduled and approved for the month of November. This review included the current status of coverage of the targets identified earlier this year as targets of priority interest in South China and the probability of the mission as proposed to contribute significantly to the intelligence to be gained by coverage of these and additional targets. In regard to the status of coverage, that anticipated [redacted] was also considered.

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2. [redacted] However, it should be noted that systematic, repetitive coverage is required to properly assess the current Chicom Military posture. Past coverage of South China targets, in response to USIB approved requirements, has consistently fallen short of the desired frequency. The current frequency of coverage is, at best, a 9 to 12 month cycle. The proposed TAGBOARD mission track will access 43 of the 84 priority targets, 18 of which have not been covered in 1970. In addition, 45 to 50 other COMIREX numbered objectives will be acquired along with approximately 30 additional targets which are not currently assigned a COMIREX collection number. It is apparent from this access list, that a successful TAGBOARD mission would impact favorably on the standing USIB/DOD requirements in the South China area.

3. The ICRS also considered the desirability of once again attempting to establish the operational capability of the TAGBOARD vehicle against "real life" intelligence problems. The Subcommittee recognized that the viability of this expensive program depends to a certain degree upon the extent to which it is exercised. With this in mind, it is apparent that there is a positive value to future intelligence efforts in establishing and maintaining the program in an operational status.

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NRO review(s)  
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4. As a result of their review ICRS recommends that the planned November/December TAGBOARD mission be flown against the priority COMIREX objectives in the area. It should be noted that operational restrictions on the depth of penetration will limit the number of high priority COMIREX targets that can be programmed to 43. Also, it was the conclusion of ICRS that a large share of the justification for this mission should be borne by the need for an operational test for the TAGBOARD capability. The proposed mission track is included as Attachment B.

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Chairman  
Imagery Collection Requirements  
Subcommittee

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